



## Women, Pornography and Violence

I did not find it easy to consent to edit an issue of *Report* focused on pornography. I hate to think about porn, let alone research and write about it, or ask others to do the same.

The idea of persons of either gender being used, photographed, described or portrayed in demeaning positions as objects, slaves or victims outrages me. And when I realize that this is all done for sexual satisfaction or stimulation—and for profit—I feel nauseated.

Women who heard that an issue of *Report* was to focus on pornography voiced a variety of questions: How bad is porn, i.e., does it really contribute to societal violence? Are Mennonites really affected by porn? Could anyone stop porn? Could Mennonites do anything to affect a huge industry? Who knows what porn is? Don't all men use porn in some form, such as *Playboy* and *Penthouse* for instance, at some time in their lives?

This issue addresses these questions to assist us in thinking critically about pornography's pervasiveness, and to move us to action.

The porn industry grew throughout the 1970's, with a gradual, steady increase of images of violence toward women and children. Today women and children are routinely portrayed being dominated and demeaned, and apparently enjoying whipping, binding, strangling, beating and even killing, in media of all kinds, including films, videos and magazines. These images feed the need for increasingly shocking stimulation created by the use of sex and violence as a fix which gives intense, short-lived satisfaction.

The vicarious nature of pornography may allow Christian men to take it in stride without questioning its effects. On two recent occasions, men in our denomination told me they use porn movies occasionally and think nothing of it. They go to places not frequented by their friends or when

on trips. "It's my business and no one else's" is the attitude they display.

Another friend told of returning late to his hotel room to find his fellow churchman viewing an X-rated HBO movie. "I don't get to look at this kind of movie very often," he explained. When I heard this I thought of my tithes and offerings funding porn viewers. God, have mercy.

In this issue:

—Ann Weber Becker defines pornography and urges us to continue naming it.

—Peter Morris writes of one man's addiction to porn and how his pastor and congregation helped him gain power over it.

—Di Brandt proposes that the silencing of women may well be pornography's goal.

—Nadine Thomas shares her indignation that our society accords greater dignity to cats than it does to women.

—Sharon Klingelsmith explores legal precedence for controlling pornography and compatibility of doing so with the First Amendment.

—Ethel Metzler reviews *The Sexual Addiction* by Patrick Carnes, a book outlining a self-help program of interest to church people.

It is my hope that these articles will encourage you to form study groups, to network with other concerned persons and organizations, to write articles, preach sermons and develop women's programs on this topic.

It is my prayer that our children and youth will hear from us an alternate story of how we value personhood, wholesome sexuality and fulfilling relationships.

—Ethel Yake Metzler

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**Ethel co-compiled this issue with Ann Weber Becker, with the assistance of Mary Metzler and Eileen Hawes.**

• What is new about today's pornography?

- Sex and violence are being combined with powerful new impact and results.
- Sexual violence is mainstreaming into the popular media: movies, cable TV, music video, television, video and magazines.
- Pornography and sexually violent material are readily available to persons of all ages; children and teen-agers
- are major consumers.
- Pornography is no longer an underground industry. Some of its profits go to major U.S. corporations and many of their executives and directors sit in the pews of our churches.
- Church members are not exempt. Some have become caught up in the use of pornography and sexually violent entertainment, as well

as experiencing violence and sexual abuse in their homes.

- Children and women are usually the victims.

Quoted from Nelson Price. **Pornography and Sexual Violence. Engage/Social Action**, pgs. 11-12. July/August 1985.

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by Ann Weber Becker

## Defining Pornography

To name a scandal for what it is undermines its power. In Madeline L'Engle's *A Wind in the Door*, Meg must name the Echthroi (evil personified) in order to save her little brother's life. After a painful struggle, she eventually succeeds: the Echthroi are named, her brother lives and good triumphs over evil. (You really must read it!)

Naming pornography for what it is undermines its power. Defining pornography is one of many actions concerned Christians can take to sensitize themselves and their communities to its influence.

I will approach the task of naming from five directions: etymologically, sampling from "comprehensive" definitions, descriptively, statistically and relationally.

### 1. Etymologically

Our English word "pornography" stems from two Greek roots: *porne* (female captive, slave or the lowest class of prostitute) and *graphos* (writing or drawing). Thus the very etymology of "pornography" links the word with: (a) women, (b) graphic portrayal and (c) inequality of relationship with men.

It is important from the outset to distinguish "pornography" from "erotica." Based on the Greek root *eros* (passionate love or desire for a particular person), erotica describes materials used for the purposes of arousal and entertainment. Unlike pornography, erotica is characterized by a respectful affirmation of human personality and sexuality, free from violence, abuse and degradation.

### 2. By Comprehensive Definitions

Attempts at comprehensive definitions of pornography tend to reflect the three meanings implicit in the Greek root. Four such definitions follow. Each highlights at least one unique insight. (Italics are mine in all instances.)

- The Ottawa City Hall Council defines pornography as "material that is intended to demean the role of women *and men* in society, or associates violence with sexuality, male and female, or that displays sexuality between non-consenting *individuals*." (1)

From our word study, we might expect "women" here instead of "individuals." Sadly, the growing use of children in pornography necessitates this broader definition. Not just women but men too are "demeaned" by pornography. Oppressed *and* oppressor need liberation.

- According to the Saskatchewan Action Committee, pornography is "any material that depicts violence, submission, coercion, ridicule, degradation and humiliation of any human being, *whether this material is sexually explicit or not*, and which condones or otherwise endorses such behavior *for the purposes of sexual stimulation or pleasure*." (2)

This more descriptive definition focuses on the *intent* of pornography, namely bringing "violence, submission, etc" into the realm of sexuality. Material need not be sexually explicit to render this distortion.

- In the United States, pornography is legally defined as "a communication (pictorial, verbal or acted out before spectators) that is meant predominantly to appeal to prurient interest (a morbid interest in sex) and that *does not have enough literary, artistic or scientific value to outweigh the prurient appeal*." (3)

This definition raises an important variable: context. Not *all* material representing degrading sexual encounter is in itself pornographic. As horrifying as it might be, the Canadian film "Not a Love Story" depicts a constructive usage of potentially pornographic material—for the sake of raising our awareness. The film's context is not one of advocating or endorsing degradation, but one of "moral realism" and education: the film helps define pictorially the problem we are defining here with words. Artists, too, may depict "offensive" realities in the *context* of critique or prophetic insight.

- The Mennonite Church and General Conference Mennonite Church 1985 document on sexuality defines pornography as "any material depicting sexual activity which, by design and emphasis, *encourages and promotes the desire* in the observer to engage in illicit sexual activity." (4)



This document takes sides on one oft-cited controversy: does exposure to pornography *satisfy* prurient interests (thus reducing sexual violence) or does it *encourage* these interests (thereby increasing sexual violence)? Substantial evidence supports the Mennonite document's view that pornography contributes to illicit sexual activity, such as rape or incest.

### 3. Descriptively

What images have been used to describe pornography? It has been called a "societal poison," "violence in the name of sex," "the undiluted essence of anti-female propaganda" and "doing dirt on sex." One description points to the very roots of our society: "When we talk about porno, we are not talking about depictions of sex or love, but about a deep and abiding hate." (5)

### 4. Statistically

Porn is big business. Its estimated annual revenue approaches the combined incomes of the conventional record and movie businesses—with "X" and "R" rated movies considered "conventional"! This amounts to nearly \$8 billion in the United States and \$500 million in Canada. (6) The combined circulations of *Playboy* and *Penthouse* exceed those of *Time* and *Newsweek* put together. (7) As prolific as the golden arches are, estimates claim that in the United States "adult bookstores" outnumber McDonald's restaurants several times. (8) To top things off, child pornography involves more than 300,000 children under the age of 16. (9)

### 5. Relationally

Pornography impacts people: women, men and the relationships between them. And here—in relationships—may rest the most telling definition of pornography. As one man put it, "In our patriarchal culture, pornography is the epitome of explicit woman-hating, in which women are objectified and reduced to body parts, available to all men. Pornography is about this *power* over women much more than it is about nudity or sexuality or fantasy." (10)

Perhaps then, pornography and patriarchy are profoundly interrelated, embodying the alliance of symptom and disease. Pornography helps *institutionalize* the culture that embraces male supremacy, to the extent that the two become mutually reinforcing. Consider the following commentaries:

"Softcore pornography, such as *Playboy* and *Penthouse*,

poses a more serious threat to females than hardcore pornography because it is so insidious and it masquerades as serious. After all, millions of men (and women) read *Playboy* for the interviews and articles, although no one has ever explained why interviews with presidents and shots of nude women go together so well." (11)

"Pornography keeps sexism sexy. It keeps sexism necessary for some people to have sexual feelings. It makes reciprocity make you go limp. It makes mutuality leave you cold. It makes tenderness and intimacy and caring make you feel like you're going to disappear into a void. It makes justice the opposite of erotic, it makes injustice a sexual thrill." (12)

But perhaps the most devastating damage of a pornographic culture is its influence on women's self-concepts. Women cannot avoid being influenced by distorted, manufactured images of themselves that try to force them out of the whole, degradation-free images of God into which they were created. Getting in touch with God-in-us in this cultural context can be a frightening step, and exhausting to sustain over the long haul.

For the journey, we must recognize pornography for what it is. Name it. Undermine its power.

And that is what definitions are all about. ■

(1) Cited by Frieda Esau (summer assistant in MCC Ottawa office). In *Pornographic Background Paper: An Outline*, p. 2. 1984.

(2) Kathleen Storrie. Pornography. *Evangelical Women's Caucus Update*, p. 1. June-August 1984.

(3) Ernest Van Den Haag. *Medical Aspects of Human Sexuality*, p. 66. August 1984.

(4) Mennonite Church/General Conference Mennonite Church. *Human Sexuality in the Christian Life: A working document for study and dialogue*, p. 140. Draft/1985.

(5) Maude Barlow. *Toronto Globe and Mail*, March 14, 1983.

(6) Kathleen Storrie, *op. cit.*

(7) *Ibid.*

(8) Nelson Price. *Pornography and Sexual Violence. Engage/Social Action*, p. 13. July/August 1985.

(9) *Ibid.*, p. 12.

(10) Dexter Guerrieri. *Pornography and Silent Men. Changing Men*, p. 9. Fall 1985.

(11) Ruthann Robson. *Pornography, Power and the First Amendment. Engage/Social Action*, p. 36. July/August 1985.

(12) John Stoltenberg. *Pornography and Freedom. Changing Men*, p. 6. Fall 1985.

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"The growth of the *Playboy* empire, with its voyeuristic 'look-but-don't touch' philosophy, has fed the grandiosity of men but has hardly helped them to cope with their fears of women on an interpersonal level..."  
—Natalie Shainess, M.D. In: *Sexual Ethics in America. Medical Aspects of Sexuality.* January 1978.



by Peter W. Morris

## Pornography Addict

I am an addict (in reformation). I have never popped pills, smoked a joint, or been high on cocaine, heroin or any of the other socially popular substances. Rarely have I indulged in an excess of hard liquor and, without too much effort, I gave up cigarettes years ago.

I have never been "busted" by the authorities for possession of anything illegal, nor have I ever seen the inside of a jail. Skid rows and other abodes of the addicted are foreign territory to me. In fact, it would shock my friends to find out that they quite regularly associate themselves with an addict.

My position within the community is well established. My name is familiar to many throughout the area since it appears in print on a regular basis. I am seen at many social gatherings, attend elaborate parties and am welcomed in prestigious company.

But I've had a problem with which I am only now coming to grips. When I'd leave the parties, when I'd say goodbye to my friends and business associates, I would pursue my own private world, my own private hell... my addiction.

When the lights were low, the atmosphere quiet, I'd park my car in the shadows, where it would not be recognized, and enter one of the local "adult" bookstores. I followed the darkness, avoided the glances of those who might recognize me and entered into a personal den of iniquity.

My locale changed at other times and I might be observed sneaking into an X-rated movie house or drive-in theater. Often, I'd simply drive into a nearby convenience store, where my addiction could easily be fed.

My addiction cost me hundreds of dollars per year; it has for the last 25 years... ever since I was 10 years old and sneaked my first look at a neighbor's copy of *Playboy* magazine.

In the years that followed, my need increased. *Playboy*, risqué then, became kid's stuff. Even the infamous *Hustler* magazine I eventually found unable to fully satisfy my lusts.

My addiction knew few bounds.

My marriage suffered, as I could not dissociate myself from my fantasy world. I have never known a normal, healthy sex life with my wife. My desires were claimed, rerouted, by the products of sick society at an early age.

My addiction? Pornography. It was the "monkey on my back." And, for pornaholics like myself, the smut peddlers are always close at hand to provide a quick fix or "just one more."

Surprised? Never thought of "dirty pictures" as addictive? Think again! As was pointed out to me recently, "To say that a bad book never hurt anyone is to say that a good book never helped anyone."

I, like millions of others, was hooked on a habit as deadly as any yet devised by the author of sin, a legal practice upheld by the North American court systems.

Yes, pornography is addictive. I know. In a scream for help, I decided to tell the world, "I am an addict!" Or, prayerfully, I should say, a "reforming" addict.

While my days and nights of hard addiction have lessened, thanks to a new and vibrant walk with Christ and through the care and concern of brothers and sisters within the church, I, like the reformed alcoholic who is only a drink away from his addiction, am only an image away from mine.

And that is the problem, for pornography is seemingly everywhere. Once found exclusively in "adult" bookstores and movies, it is now available at drug and grocery stores, in gift shops (in the form of "adult" toys and games) and, via cable television, hardcore erotica is increasingly available as in-home entertainment.

Struggling with the pornography problem for most of my life, it was not until I found help through a support group at our church—Hickory (N.C.) Mennonite—that I first was made aware of the pervasive effect of the problem upon my life, later finding the path of spiritual regeneration through which the problem could be treated.

Using the text *The Sensation of Being Somebody* by Maurice E. Wagner (Zondervan Publishing House), Mark Landis, pastor of the church, started weekly care and share groups, involving many couples within our church community.

"Pornography is now a \$6 billion business, peddled through such respectable channels as the friendly neighborhood convenience store. The '7-Eleven' chain, for instance, currently sells more porno magazines than any other retailer in America. Long-established industries and corporations are also ready to

make a profit through pornography. The tobacco company, J.R. Reynolds, who also owns Kentucky Fried Chicken and Del Monte Foods, spends more money to advertise in pornography magazines than any other corporation. CBS distributes *Playboy's* porno video cassettes and Coca Cola,

through its subsidiary Columbia Pictures, recently began distribution of *Playboy's* sex movies to theaters." —Donald Wildmon, executive director of the National Federation for Decency. In: *A Time for Action*. July/Aug. 1984. Pages 8-9.

In often gut-wrenching sessions, we surfaced topics that had been buried since childhood. Topics, including anger and fear, suicidal tendencies, addictions, plus more recent problems such as infidelity, divorce and remarriage, were discussed with regularity.

Roots of these problems, and many more, were dug up and laid bare. Tears were commonplace as the pains of lifelong repressions were brought to the light and, through prayers and love, renewal achieved. Christian commitment, previously hindered by sins of almost unbearable weight, was set free to grow through a new appreciation of God's healing powers and a sense of self-worth.

And, in times of temptation, outstretched arms were there to affirm worth and confirm Christ's love. The results of such gatherings and commitments brought our entire congregation to a new awareness of life and dedication to both Christ and each other. Into our church, through these prayer-and-share groups, was brought a vibrancy never before known.

Surprisingly, a new commitment to the community surrounding our church has come about as a direct result of our own renewal experiences through the Christ-centered walk. Whereas we once had been content to minister most directly to our own congregation's needs, we now share a concern for our community, city and regions beyond as part of our extended Christian ministry.

Issues confronting both our faith and our community, be they the concerns for prayers in our public schools, the abortion issue, or family violence, to mention a few, are now regularly brought before our membership as topics for fervent prayer.

Even the move to clean up our society, ridding it of the plague of pornography, an issue once foreign to many, is now attracting involvement.

"There is nothing that happened in Sodom and Gomorrah that is not happening in our country today," emphasized Robert Showers, assistant U.S. district attorney, in speaking to a group of concerned Christians locally on the pornography issue.

Showers, along with William Kelly, a 24-year veteran of the FBI, and Paul C. McCommon, legal counsel for the Arizona-based Citizens for Decency Through Law, all

advocated the involvement of Christians in the anti-obscenity movement.

Speaking to our group of Baptists, Lutherans, Methodists... and Mennonites... these professions brought the shocking statistics relative to pornography before many who knew relatively little about the issue and its effects on our society.

"Many of the 50,000 American children who disappear each year are believed to have been abducted for use in pornographic movies, and for use as sexual slaves," explained McCommon, adding that most of these children are never heard from again.

McCommon also cited the studies that show an "overwhelming" link between the spread of pornography and the increase of rape and other crimes against women and children.

Citing the trend away from "normal" sexual depictions, the group explained that magazines available nationwide in "convenience stores," well within the reach and sight of children, regularly carry graphic features on group sex, homosexual encounters and bondage.

What is sold beyond the doors of "adult" establishments? Books and films commonly showing "scenes of bestiality, defecation, sadomasochism and defilement of religion," according to Kelly.

Robert Showers, noting that the damage caused by pornography and other related avenues of the sex industry (a \$6 billion a year business almost controlled by organized crime in the U.S., according to FBI reports) is often not realized until it is too late, emphasized, "Without religious conviction, it is hard to be credible in the fight against pornography."

Speaking the thoughts of at least one "reforming" addict, he continued, "The conspiracy of silence is Satan's greatest tool."■

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• Does film violence

contribute to violence against women?

Movies with violence and sexual attacks against women increase acceptance of violent acts against women including wife battering, rape and forced sex in dating situations.

According to data released in September by the National Coalition on Television Violence, recent research

reports show that 35 percent of American and Canadian college and adult males admit at least some chance that they would attempt to rape a woman if assured of not getting caught.

The studies showed that a significant minority of adult males had attitudes very similar to convicted rapists in accepting the myth that women enjoy being raped and that the use of force in sexual relations

is normal.

Studies done by Dr. Ed Donnerstein of the University of Wisconsin and Dr. Neil Malamuth of UCLA compared the effects of four types of films on male viewers: (1) sexually violent, (2) violent but not sexual, (3) explicitly sexual but not violent, and (4) neutral.

The researchers found no increase in violent or sexually violent attitudes toward women

caused by either the neutral or the explicitly sexual film. However, both the violent and (more so) the sexually violent films resulted in major increases in the willingness to administer pain to women and to report an increased likelihood of raping a woman.

Dr. Thomas Radecki, M.D., with the Southern Illinois University School of Medicine and chairman of the National Coalition on Television

by Di Brandt

## Pornography Silences Women

We are accustomed to thinking of pornography as licentious, as a transgression of socially acceptable sexual behavior. We are therefore surprised by the pervasiveness of pornographic images around us. If pornography is socially unacceptable, how is it to be found openly displayed in magazines at the corner store? How does it carry so much influence in advertising and fashion?

If we look carefully at the recurring images of pornography, furthermore, we find assumptions about femaleness and about the body which are strangely familiar, which are in fact shared by all kinds of people who see themselves as morally upright, as officially opposed to pornography. These assumptions include a sense that the body is wicked and uncontrolled and needs to be "conquered" and subdued by the mind, and that women embody the "evilness" of sexuality and therefore must be disciplined by men.

The pornographer's portrait thus shows woman as a mindless creature who is nevertheless dangerous and alluring. And while we are offended by the pornographer's art (as indeed he intends us to be), we recognize in his attitudes toward women and sexuality the fundamental biases of our cultural heritage.

The medieval church fathers railed against the wicked wiles of women, doubting their capacity for mental and spiritual life. Millions of "witches" were tortured and burned at the stake during the 15th, 16th and 17th centuries for the sake of the church and their own salvation (and because they were suspected of healing powers!) Much of our scientific and medical practice is directed at "subduing" and controlling the natural processes of our bodies and of the earth. Our literature describes women as typically frivolous and weak, and yet at the same time a terrifying threat to men's physical and moral strength. In our society women have been excluded almost entirely from positions of power and influence—silenced—for their own and society's "good," and because, it is often claimed, women themselves want it that way.

As Mennonites, we have proclaimed the "priesthood of believers" against a privileged hierarchy of the powerful. We have promoted consensus as a way of decision-making instead of official decrees. That is, we have acknowledged the validity and value of each person's wishes and feelings in all matters. Our forebears asserted the fundamental innocence of children and the right of each person to choose his/her own beliefs without coercion. And we have urged each other and the world to develop nonviolent solutions to conflict. We have believed in the equality of all persons before God, and in the way of peace. And this is what makes me proud to be called a Mennonite.

But we have been speaking out of both sides of our mouths. For at the same time we have given fathers and husbands "authority" over their children and wives. We have required submission and obedience to those in positions of power just as surely as if we believed that "might is right." We have sided with the oppressors in our society more often than with the oppressed, despite our claims to the contrary. We have excluded women and children from the central decision-making processes of the "brotherhood." And we have taught our children and women deep shame for all those impulses and desires which did not fit the patriarchal decrees.

If it is true, as writer Susan Griffin has suggested, that the silence of women, and of all that has been symbolically associated with women in our culture (children, the body, animals, the land), is both a major ingredient and a final goal of pornography, ought we to see the conspicuous silence of women in our Mennonite community as symptomatic of a related concern? It is too easy to say that we do not have, in our tradition, an overtly women-hating literature. In actuality women figure in Mennonite writing, as in public life, almost without exception as a terrible absence. The boards of our church conferences continue to be male-dominated despite active participation in church life by women members. Is it surprising therefore that the agenda of our theological and organizational discussions continue to reflect a male bias at the expense of other groups in the Mennonite community?

Things are slowly beginning to change. Women (and occasionally men) are beginning to speak out against sexism and pornography, and identifying the kinds of violence it engenders against women, such as sexual harassment, assault and rape—violence which no woman living in our society can escape, whether it be a daily reality at work, a paralyzing trauma in the street or bedroom, or a constant nagging fear.

Violence, agreed with other persons urging government action compatible with the First Amendment.

Radecki called for immediate congressional hearings. "There are many steps that Congress can take that are compatible with the First Amendment," he said. "We need a public movie rating system to restrict such viewing to adults only. We also need required counteradvertising to warn

viewers of the proven harmful effects."

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The Mennonite church has always officially opposed pornography in its various forms. But we have continued to use the language of submission and obedience, and of "brotherhood," with each other, and in relation to God. This language, at its worst, speaks of arbitrary privilege and power of one group of people over another (and we know which group women have belonged to); and at its best, excludes one-half of our membership from public identity. The most inappropriate response to the role of women in the church, given this context, is the question, "Where are the women and why aren't they speaking up?"

For Mennonite women, learning to speak will mean, first of all, feeling free to express their anger and hurt, to articulate their own long history as invisible victims who have had to carry the blame for their aggressors' sins. And it will mean being asked by those in power to begin naming their own separate knowledge of themselves in their own women's style. Most of us are more than a little afraid of all the changes this will involve. For most of us sense intuitively the deep connection between women's silence and the nature of language and power as we have known them. And we're not sure what the alternatives are.

I imagine a room in which important decisions are being made. The voices in this room altogether make quite a babbling, for they include the voices of children and women as well as men. Because each voice is heard for its own unique sound, no one's wishes are forgotten. And they feel each in their bones the intimate connection between themselves, the people around them and the world, and they call this love.

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by Nadine Thomas

## On Cats, Women and Dignity

If you only skimmed the front and back pages of your newspaper Friday morning, you missed it. If you looked at page 3, you couldn't have missed it. There, in a box meant to draw the reader's attention, was a story with the headline, "Cat Haters Calendar Halted by Controversy."

It seems that a photographer who must remain anonymous—allegedly because of threats on his life—has raised the ire of cat lovers. The hapless photographer, who was only looking for a way to make a buck, stole an idea from somebody else and created a cat calendar for 1982. According to the Associated Press article, the calendar featured cats being hanged and wrapped in foil on a grill. About 3,500 of the calendars had been sent to retail outlets, priced at \$4.95.

The photographer was ready to smile all the way to the bank when outraged members of the American Humane Association called for a national boycott of the calendars. Further shipments of the offending calendars have been halted and the photographer's lawyer is trying to sheathe the claws threatening his client. Noting that several other anti-cat calendars and books by other publishers have become popular lately, the lawyer protested, "He really makes no claim of having any sort of an original idea." With a lawyer making personal remarks like that, who needs enemies?

But the lawyer's most interesting comments were, "Not one cat was hurt. In fact, the cat featured in several of these photographs is the personal pet of a close friend of the photographer. The cat actually seemed to enjoy the photo sessions."

Now, I like cats. Two of them share my home and I find them endlessly and alternately amusing, comforting and downright aggravating. When Sam knocks over my kitchen waste can three days in a row, I do entertain thoughts of drastic reprisals. When Jessica pulls down my bulletin board, scattering all my carefully arranged photographs, cartoons and mementos, I make threats. But I would never really do anything cruel to those animals with almost-human characteristics.



**Anti-porn stickers, featuring a crossed-out playboy bunny, are available for 50 cents each from Green Light Graphics, P.O. Box 349, Somerville, Mass. 02144.**



But I'm not writing this column in defense of cats. The Humane Association seems to have things pretty well under control. No, what struck me about the little story is the connection between photographs of cats being mauled and the sadomachistic photographs of naked women—available almost anywhere.

Magazines like *Oui* and *Hustler* have been making big bucks for their owners for years by showing naked or almost-naked women being whipped, chained and otherwise abused. Except for some outraged feminists, who are usually discounted as being "overly sensitive," there isn't much protest. There's certainly been no action as effective as that of the Humane Association, which managed to stop distribution of the cat calendars. Unlike the women who are portrayed as sex objects, cats do seem almost human, after all.

"We're opposed to that kind of sick humor," says Martin Passaglia Jr., the association's executive director, of the cat calendars. "That hardly represents the humane ethic."

Neither does pornography, but THAT issue is neatly sidestepped with arguments about the First Amendment—that's the one about freedom of expression, remember?

One could also argue that women have free will, whereas cats do not. But it's only a relatively few women who are posing for photographs that degrade their natural, human beauty. Those glamorous models—whose perfectly applied makeup and perfectly styled hair denies the torturous things being done to their bodies—may actually enjoy the photo sessions. The real women in the world—who feel the reaction of men to those pictures, whether they are physically beaten or "merely" taunted on the street—would prefer the models find some other way to make a living.

Even though they smile, not all models do pose willingly, however. The story of one woman raises questions about how many other women are living the fate she finally escaped. A lot of people saw Linda Lovelace perform in the X-rated movie, "Deep Throat." She told everyone she enjoyed it, and had a lot of people believing her, too. It was only after she escaped from and later divorced her manager-husband Chuck Traynor that she told a different story.

In her autobiography, *Ordeal*, the former sex symbol, who now uses her family name, Boreman, reveals the death threats Traynor used against her all those years. It wasn't pleasure that kept her posing for cameras and

performing sexual acts with all those men, she says; it was the desire for life and hope for the future, no matter how awful the present.

One of the men Ms. Boreman serviced, according to her book, was Al Goldstein, publisher of *Screw* magazine. Ms. Boreman's description of Goldstein makes him sound like a thoroughly disgusting example of humanity. Yet Goldstein was one of several publishers of pornographic magazines lauded by Gay Talese, author of *Thy Neighbor's Wife*.

The book, which spent five months on the best seller list, is hyped as the landmark work on sexuality in America. In it, Talese used Goldstein's magazine as one example of the way Americans are becoming more open about their sexuality. He also wrote a powerful argument for free sexual expression, both legally and personally. His conclusions sound grand, but also somewhat naive.

Honest, caring sexual intimacy between consenting adults, which Talese argues for, is one thing; exploitation of women's bodies—in a way that makes them even less human than cats—is another. A sincere compliment from a man to a woman—"You look terrific!"—is far different from catcalls where a male makes evaluative comments of the physical anatomy of a female.

Respected national surveys show that violence on television is often the catalyst for violent behavior for those watching it. It would seem to follow that photographic degradation by women would affect, at the very least, the attitudes of men toward women, particularly women they don't know personally.

The degrading need not be anything as major as a rape or beating; it's reflected in the wolf whistles and verbal invasions of privacy most women receive from a certain segment of men just walking down the street.

The photographer who tried to make a buck from the exploitation of cats will probably have to find a new line. The publishers of magazines like *Oui* and *Hustler* will probably just keep on getting richer.

Score one point for the dignity of animals; none for women.■

**Nadine Thomas is a journalist with the *Intelligencer Journal* of Lancaster, Pa. She graduated from Goshen (Ind.) College in 1974 with a co-major in English and communications. She is a member of National Planned Parenthood of America, National Organization for Women and the Pennsylvania Women's Press Association. Her article originally appeared in the *Intelligencer Journal*.**





by Sharon L. Klingelsmith

## Feminism, Pornography and the First Amendment

Obscenity is not protected by First Amendment guarantees of freedom of speech and press. Why then is there a problem in regulating pornography? The problem arises due to the very narrow definition the courts have given to obscenity and an unwillingness to broaden it for fear of eroding the First Amendment.

The framers of the Constitution viewed freedom of expression as an absolute essential in the operation of a democratic society. The First Amendment does not just protect expression acceptable to the majority or supportive of current government policy. Unpopular expression and minority views are also protected from government regulation. Thus, members of the American Nazi Party marching through a Jewish neighborhood in Skokie, the Hari Krishna proselytizing at airports and Mennonites protesting U.S. arms policy are equally protected.

The Supreme Court, in interpreting the Constitution, has made some exceptions to this constitutional protection of speech, however. Among these exceptions, the Supreme Court has held that obscene material is categorically unprotected by the First Amendment. (*Roth v. United States*, 1957) The justification is that obscenity is utterly without redeeming social value.

Since *Roth*, the Supreme Court has struggled to define obscenity, particularly given varying community and individual standards. In *Jacobellis v. Ohio* (1964), Justice Stewart felt that criminal laws regulating speech were constitutionally limited to hardcore pornography. He was unsure the latter could ever be intelligibly defined but added his now-famous statement, "But I know it when I see it."

The Supreme Court's concern has been to develop standards for judging obscenity that could not also be used to suppress protected speech. Such standards evolved into the celebrated three-part test in *Miller v. California* (1973):

1. Whether the average person applying contemporary community standards would find the work taken as a

whole appeals to the prurient interest;

2. Whether the work depicts or describes, in a patently offensive way, sexual conduct specifically defined by applicable state law;

3. Whether the work, taken as a whole, lacks serious literary, artistic, political or scientific value.

This definition goes beyond *Roth* in that a work may be found obscene even though it is not utterly without worth. However broad this three-part test may seem to the layperson, however, it has been construed very narrowly by the courts, in their constant vigilance against state erosion of First Amendment rights. And as can be seen in the second criteria above, state law must specifically define the sexual conduct that is being regulated. Vague or overbroad statutes are not permitted.

The obscenity law has evolved in response to concerns that are essentially moral in nature. Into this arena have come feminists who advocate suppression of pornography not so much because it contains erotica but because it degrades women and promotes male dominance. (1)

The idea that speech should be regulated because it is discriminatory is a new one. While the elimination of such discrimination is a commendable societal goal, First Amendment doctrine has never permitted government to achieve such goals through the regulation of speech.

The danger is this: Once pornographic materials or "speech" is regulated because it is harmful to society, the way has been cleared for government to declare other types of speech harmful to society. Thus, within the justification for suppression of speech to encourage equality lie the seeds for encouragement of intolerance and erosion of fundamental liberties as well.

What, then, can be done? It has been stated well by another writer on this topic: "We must silence pornography—by speaking up louder and louder and over and over. We cannot expect laws to do that which should be done by persons. Public opinion has always been the best censor." (2) ■

(1) See C. Jacobs. Patterns of Violence: A Feminist Perspective on the Regulation of Pornography. *Harvard Women's Legal Journal* 7:5. 1984.

(2) Ruthann Robson. Pornography, Power and the First Amendment. *Engage/Social Action*, p.36. July/August 1985.

Sharon L. Klingelsmith is an attorney in Philadelphia. Previously she worked for seven years as a librarian and archivist at the Mennonite Historical Library and Archives of the Mennonite Church in Goshen, Ind.



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**Book Review: *The Sexual Addiction*. By Patrick Carnes, Ph.D. CompCare Publications. 1983.**

**Reviewed by Ethel Y. Metzler**

This book is a must for persons at work within the church setting, for in its six short chapters (181 pages), it points out the pitfalls of sexuality gone astray and with courage and frankness helps the reader understand the nature of sexual addiction, such as to pornography or incest. With its charts, diagrams and checklists, this book can assist those who have a problem or who want to help others.

Carnes sees a 12-step program similar to the stepwise self-help program of Alcoholics Anonymous as the strategy of choice for recovery. The journey toward health begins with acknowledging the problem and continues through breaking the secrecy, acknowledging powerlessness over the obsession, gaining willingness to rely on God, and finally to challenging faulty core beliefs.

Drawing upon nine years of research into the nature of sexual addiction, Carnes provides an overview of the interior world of the sexual addict and the addict's family. He describes sexual addiction as a pathological relationship with a mood-altering event which becomes focal to living. He sees the underlying belief system as impaired and deficient.

Carnes identifies a four-step cycle moving the addict through sequences of unmanageability, preoccupation, ritualization and back to a defective

belief system. As this addictive sequence accelerates, the person's normal and addictive selves engage in a compelling struggle. Values, priorities, loved ones are drawn into this maelstrom—often with only a crisis event intervening.

Carnes categorizes sexual addiction into three operational levels. Level one includes normal, acceptable and tolerated sexual behaviors. Level two includes behaviors which are clearly victimizing and which society has legally sanctioned. Often thought of as nuisances, level-two behaviors include voyeurism, indecent calls and liberties, and exhibitionism. Level-three behaviors hold grave consequences for the victims and legal consequences for the addict.

Although Carnes views sexual addiction as primarily a male phenomenon, he sees women as profoundly affected by faulty beliefs about sex-role stereotypes and sexuality. Women may also be the target of male sexual addictions, such as being forced into sadomasochistic actions by men acting out the themes and images of pornography.

Carnes exhorts readers not to fail to recognize the syndrome's likelihood among women. To do so is to deprive them of help and to perpetrate sexism which forces women to be the guardians of sexual morality.

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## Letters

Your recent issue (July/August 1985, Mothers and Daughters) was very special and I just needed to write you a note of thanks. I lost my mother in 1972 and continue to miss her presence in my life, but your *Report* reminded me of how very much I have to thank her for—too many to count here, but mostly for my sense of independence and Christian feminist ideas...she was way ahead of her time. Again, thanks for helping me to remember.

—Charlotte deGregoris, Associate Director Field Education, Eastern Baptist Theological Seminary, Philadelphia, Pa.

I have appreciated several of your *Reports* in the past and again found some articles in your last (July/August 1985, Mothers and Daughters) issue meaningful. However, I was also a little disturbed by the subtle references associating a woman's worth and status with her education, her employment or even with the wages paid for her work.

In "Pieces of Light," this subtleness comes across in this statement: "Although her diligence and initiative have led to an increased library usage in her small town, her pay remains that of an uneducated worker." Why should pay be any different just because some of us have had the opportunity of an education whereas others have not?

Often it is non-white, single women, or even men, who are trying to support their growing families on low-paying jobs—due to lack of education. Frequently they are the family's only wage earner and cannot afford to take time out to get more education. Would it not be more just to increase people's pay because that is what they need to survive, not on the basis of having an education or a high-profile job?

Let us keep encouraging each other to upgrade and develop skills because of who we are and what we can be. Let us use the "feminine" resources we were created with for the purpose of becoming better images of God and serving him and humanity. Women's concerns must go far beyond the personal fulfillment of the individual, which seems to be the obsession with North American women. When personal fulfillment and self-actualization are associated with getting a higher paying job, or is swayed by materialistic symbols, then it is time to analyze how

many of our women's concerns are actually only Western civilization's concerns. Let us therefore change the injustices of the "monetary worth" of a person rather than adapt to it!

My second concern is that after reading the last issue, I felt as if I was not quite "with it," not quite feministic enough to be associated as one with women's concerns in the 1980's. In fact, I identified more often with the mothers than with the daughters. A woman's worth can still be experienced even if she continues to enjoy living with old/traditional roles. I guess I felt personally attacked when I read "What's There to Say?"

Although I believe in woman's equality, sometimes the old roles stay part of us because it is what we enjoy and what works in our relationships. For example, although I enjoy studying and am anticipating graduate studies in the future, I still enjoy things like being a full-time mother of four small children, shoveling the garden, picking berries in the summer with the children, tearing out weeds, butchering chickens, making noodles, preparing meals and baking buns. My husband has no interest in painting, so why can't I get out the old ladder, climb on the roof and paint the house? This release of physical energy complements the release of mental energy, gives me a break from routine jobs and permits me to see parenting from a different perspective. Parenting in the berry patch requires different skills and energies than does parenting in the home or daycare setting!

Yet I don't see these energies as being "destructive and applied to a constructive goal." Instead, they are simply neutral energies being applied constructively, rather than destructively. If women are also made in the image of God, would we then not label their energies as creative rather than destructive?

I have hope that I can change some of the injustices and inequalities in the world even at the expense of postponing my own personal fulfillment for awhile. Yet I suspect that by caring about others' needs and unjust treatments, we might also experience personal fulfillment. And if some women choose the servitude role to do this, let us not make them feel any less worthy or less equal in comparison to the rest of the feminists in Western society. Let us encourage them to be the best they can be, even if it is the best servant. Our Lord set the perfect example. Do we call his life "lack of self-actualization" or can we call it CHOOSING a lifestyle?

—Maria Matty, Clearbrook, B.C.

I was recently given several back copies of *Report*, which was my first encounter with your paper.

I have felt so encouraged and uplifted by the knowledge that there are other women who feel as I do—that I DO count in God's kingdom and that I am NOT inferior in God's sight, although it seems my church and its constitution teach the opposite.

I co-teach a ladies adult Sunday school class (women are not allowed to teach Scripture to the men) and I would be most happy to distribute copies of *Report* to members of my class and to a few other women in my church who I know would be interested. A dozen copies would be fine to begin with. I am willing to serve as a contact in my church but I must confess it makes me feel "guilty" for spreading "women's lib" propaganda, since I know it would be viewed as such by the majority of the congregation.

Thank you for the fine job you are doing and thanks for being faithful to your values. I confess I had become very discouraged and disillusioned by my role in the church and had developed a negative attitude of resignation and despair. Your paper has given me new enthusiasm to carry on. Thank you again!

—A Canadian reader, name withheld

I have just finished reading my first *Report*, May/June 1985. I am so impressed and excited at the brave new beginnings being made to foster dialogue on alternative theories of women's development. My present studies at the University of Manitoba are leading me along the same exciting but difficult path. I would very much like to receive the bimonthly *Report* and enclose a small contribution.

—Mary Anne Hildebrand, Winkler, Man.

Recently I have become aware of *Report*. Since this is an area of deep concern to me, I would appreciate receiving my own copy by mail regularly. I have enclosed a check to help cover the costs of mailing and publishing such a publication. Thank you for your good work.

—Muriel Bechtel, Toronto, Ont.

Please remove my name from this ungodly mailing list. You have mostly valid concerns with terrible attitudes.

—Rachel Stutzman, Goshen, Ind.

Thank you very much for making *Report* available. I really enjoy reading it. Each issue is so different and represents many different authors. It always sets my mind in motion. Keep up the good work!

—Sonya Miller, Goshen, Ind.

## News and Verbs

A Women's Inter-Seminary Conference is being held April 4-6 at Iliff School of Theology in Denver, Colo. Events of the gathering include three keynote addresses, workshops, a display of original artwork and a Rocky Mountain outing! The conference is for women of all faiths—laywomen, clergy and soon-to-be clergy. Registrations are due by Feb. 28. For details contact Barbara Bartholomew, 2201 S. University Blvd., Denver, Colo. 80210; (303) 744-1287.

An experimental police station, run by and for women, was set up several months ago in São Paulo, Brazil. The idea arose from the belief that women who are victims of violence (particularly sexual) avoid turning to policemen for help for fear of lack of understanding—or worse, of being ignored or badly treated. Chief commissioner of the station, Rosmary Correa, says the station where she previously worked dealt with only three rape cases in a whole year. Now, she, three detectives and 13 social workers handle 200 to 300 women a day, including approximately 14 rape cases and 60 beatings.

A comprehensive **Documentation on Prostitution Tourism** is available for \$6 from the Center for Responsible Tourism, 2 Kensington Rd., San Anselmo, Calif. 95960. "Research and further study show that prostitution tourism is much more widespread than originally envisaged," says Dame Nita Barrow, President of the World Council of Churches, in an address of commendation for the book. It has been published by the Ecumenical Coalition on Third World Tourism.

Sally Schreiner has joined Biff Weidman as coeditor of *Urban Connections*, an inter-Mennonite newsletter. Schreiner works with the Seminary Consortium for Urban Pastoral Education in Chicago.

The Third World Women's Project of the Institute for Policy Studies sponsors dynamic *Third World women* to come to the United States to meet with concerned citizens. Visitors for spring 1986 are: Susana Blaustein Munoz, an Argentinian filmmaker who

produced "Las Madres," the story of the mothers of the disappeared in Argentina; Nursat Aygen, a Turkish woman who has been outspoken on the violations of human rights in Turkey; and Hortensia Allende, the former First Lady of Chile and an

internationally recognized human rights advocate.

For more information about sponsoring one of these speakers in your community, contact the Institute at 1901 Que Street, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20009. Phone (202) 234-9382.

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Mennonites **Al Zook** and **Mary Sprunger-Froese**, along with Franciscan Sister **Marie Nord** will go to trial on March 4 for their plowshares action at Martin Marietta's Denver (Colo.) plant on Sept. 27. The trio poured blood, unfurled a peace banner and prayed in a laboratory used for the development of MX missiles. If convicted of the burglary and criminal mischief charges, they may face 4-8 years' imprisonment. To offer support, interested persons may write them at 235 E. Fountain, Colorado Springs, Colo. 80903.

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Businesswoman **Lois Wismer Hernandez** serves as a volunteer coordinator for Mennonite Historians of Eastern Pennsylvania.

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Bluffton College's associate director of development is **Karen Glick-Colquitt**, who comes to the newly created position with a master's degree in college student personnel from Bowling Green (Ohio) State University.

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**Cheryl Goertz** has been named manager of group services at Mennonite Mutual Aid in Goshen, Ind. She attends Hively Avenue Church in Elkhart, Ind. and has a master's degree in management from Central Michigan University of Mt. Pleasant, Mich.

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**Charlotte Siemens** has been appointed an associate director of Mennonite Voluntary Service of the General Conference. Working out of Winnipeg, she will administer the Canadian units. She is a graduate of Canadian Mennonite Bible College and the University of Manitoba.

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**Nancy and Duane Sider** served as Fall Spiritual Emphasis Week speakers at Eastern Mennonite College in Harrisonburg, Va. Nancy is the college's director of counseling services and Duane is a pastor and doctoral student.

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**Frances Jackson** is serving as coordinator of the Philadelphia Mennonite Council, which is involved in the work of nine congregations and six Mennonite organizations in that city.

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**Esther Kisamore**, a Mennonite, and Sister **Margaret Kiefer** were sentenced on Dec. 2 for civil disobedience in protest of the militarization of space at the Consolidated Space Operations Center in Colorado Springs, Colo. The judge was sympathetic and lenient, stating that the women's planting of sprouted wheat at the facility probably improved the land. Kiefer was given a \$50 suspended fine and Kisamore, two days in jail.

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**Marlene Kropf** co-led a workshop on Educating for Worship in December at Lancaster (Pa.) Mennonite High School. She is staffperson for congregational education for the Mennonite Church Board of Congregational Ministry.

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"Communicating the God-Word" was the theme **June Alliman Yoder** chose for her series of Staley Lectureship presentations at Hesston (Kan.) College. Yoder teaches preaching and communication at Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind.

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Goshen College has **three teaching positions in the music department** beginning fall 1986. A full-time position includes teaching undergraduate theory and private instruction in woodwinds, brass or organ. A one-year full-time position involves teaching lower level music theory, with preferred studio specialty in low-stringed instruments or woodwinds and brass. The primary responsibility of a two-thirds-time position is to head the piano preparatory program. For more information, contact Willard Martin, Dean, Goshen College, Goshen, Ind. 46526. Phone (219) 533-3161.

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Having been dormant for a number of years, the **Student Women's Association** of Eastern Mennonite College is once again active on the Harrisonburg, Va. campus. **Cindy Lapp** serves as chair of the group, whose purpose is to raise consciousness about women's issues, and offer support. Members attended a conference on pornography this fall.

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A Disciples of Christ minister from Ohio, Rev. Joan Brown Campbell, has become the **first woman to head the U.S. office of the World Council of Churches**.

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**The Annotated Guide to Women's Periodicals** lists over 250 publications in the U.S., Canada, Mexico, Central and South America. Each publication is briefly reviewed by category and indexed by title and geographically. Individual (\$12) and institutional (\$20) subscriptions are available from Annotated Guide, Box E-94, Earlham College, Richmond, Ind. 47374.

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MCC urgently needs medical workers, especially **nurses** with public health training, for many service opportunities worldwide. Readers who are trained as nurses or who know nurses who might be interested in MCC service are invited to inquire of administrative team Ruth Keidel/Marlene Reiff, MCC, Box M, Akron, Pa. 17501.

**Teresa Pankratz of Chicago has provided the illustrations in this issue. She asks that they not be reproduced without her permission.**

An interdenominational gathering of Canadian women is slated for May 1-4 in Winnipeg. Sponsored by the Women's Inter-Church Council of Canada, the conference aims to help participants understand the problems faced by Canadian women in their struggle for equality and justice, and to develop strategies for change. Details can be obtained from the Council at 77 Charles St. W., Toronto, Ont. M5S 1K5.

Recently returned from three years of teaching in China, **Agnes Hubert and Barry Nolan** are sharing two part-time jobs at MCC Canada. They will help administer the China Educational Exchange program and also serve with the Coalition of Provincial Organizations of the Handicapped.

**Greet Lodder**, a Dutch Mennonite women who has served in Brazil, will organize new work among poverty-stricken Africans living in Lisbon, Portugal. The work is being sponsored by Mennonite Central Committee, the European Mennonite Committee and a local Baptist Church.

*REPORT* is published bimonthly by the MCC Committee on Women's Concerns. The committee, formed in 1973, believes that Jesus Christ teaches equality of all persons. By sharing information and ideas, the committee strives to promote new relationships and corresponding supporting structures in which men and women can grow toward wholeness and mutuality. Articles and views presented in *Report* do not necessarily reflect official positions of the Committee

on Women's Concerns.

Correspondence and address changes should be sent to Emily Will, Editor, MCC, Box M, Akron, PA 17501.

U.S. residents may send subscriptions to the above address. Canadian residents may send subscriptions to MCC Canada, 201-1483 Pembina Highway, Winnipeg, MB R3T 2C8. A donation of \$6.00 per year per subscription is suggested.

The MCC Committee on Women's Concerns is seeking candidates to serve as the U.S. Mennonite Church representative on the seven-member binational committee. The position is currently filled by **Joyce Eby** of Harrisonburg, Va., whose term ends this summer. For more information or to express interest, contact Emily Will, MCC, Box M, Akron, Pa. 17501.

**Eleanor and David Epp-Stobbe** were installed as co-pastors of Hamilton (Ont.) Mennonite Church on October 27.

**Wanda Teague** wrote the words and music of a song commissioned by the Virginia Mennonite Conference for its 150th anniversary celebration. Teague is a 1981 graduate of Eastern Mennonite College, where she majored in music. She teaches Suzuki violin to 45 youngsters and serves as minister of music at Trissels Mennonite Church, Broadway, Va.

**John and Wanda Sinkey** were recently licensed and installed as co-pastors of Elmwood Mennonite Church in Kendallville, Ind.

**Laura Loewen** has returned from Zambia and Zimbabwe, where she served as MCC country representative, and is attending Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries in Elkhart, Ind.

Faithful *Report* readers may have noticed that the last issue of *Report*, although mailed out in December, was dated Sept./Oct. 1985. Because we missed getting out one issue in 1985, we now need to catch up with the calendar. Thus, this issue has been dated Jan./Feb. 1986.



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